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# The Vision

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**The Vision**  
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20 |

## The Vision

Pacing with quiet tread the garden path,  
A sombre nun caressed her rosary.  
The sunshine shed about her golden bands  
And dappled shadows where the shrubbery grew.  
The ivy-covered walls beside her path  
Gave shelter to a host of happy birds.  
The fountain tinkled softly and the sun  
Made myriad jewels of the drops of spray;  
While in the basin cool the fishes sped  
Like golden arrows through the water fern.

A moment here she paused, as one by one  
The ebon beads slipped through her childlike hands;  
Then journeyed on past some quaint outdoor shrine  
Where coldly sweet its marble saint looked down  
From rocky niche beside the garden path  
In quiet benediction on the nun.

She loved this garden with its holy calm;  
The faint sweet perfume of its many flowers,  
The glossy ivy o'er its walls festooned;  
And thought while resting in its grateful shade  
That if in all the world peace might be found,  
'Twould be within the quiet cloister here.

But life today had seemed inadequate;  
Its greatest mission only half fulfilled.  
Some measure, though, there was of recompense;

Some hidden chord that thrilled to aching need,  
Responsive to the touch of kindred pain,  
Like some rude storm-swept harp the wind plays on.  
The children sought her and the dumb things, too,  
With wistful eyes invited sympathy.  
For her the lilies of the cloister bloomed  
And mothers brought their babes for her caress ;

Though Love had passed her way, with quiet mien,  
She, knowing, watched him go. His journey led  
Toward Beauty's shrine whereat he worshipped long.  
Until her heart grown sick from hope deferred  
Had turned to Heaven to seek surcease from pain.  
And then the cloister door had closed behind  
And Youth and Joy and Gladness were shut out ;  
Nor had the Peace she sought within these walls  
Yet come to soothe the soul of burning pain.

Renunciation! None but God above  
Could know the price of self that she had paid ;  
The anguished nights, the dawns of tuneless mirth  
Made glad with lilt of bird and budding flower,  
For all His creatures save herself alone !

The beads had all been told. With reverent hands  
The rude dark cross to quivering lips was pressed ;  
A prayer of anguish, yet so gently breathed  
None save the flowers and her God could hear :  
"Lord let Thy servant live henceforth for Thee ;  
Take from her heart all earthborn thoughts and may  
Her best endeavor be Thy ministry.  
And if sometimes her erring mind should stray  
To that dim past of human love and hope  
Forgive, O Father! Let her be content

That Thy love fills her earthly father's place,  
That of the tender mother Thou hast called  
And that of him who found in her no grace.  
And since in Thine own wisdom infinite,  
Unornamented stands this house of clay  
Illumine with Thy love its inner shrine  
That all who pass may see its flame afar  
And Heavenward guide their footsteps by its glow."

As prayed the nun, grew bright with sunset's fires  
The windows of the grey cathedral near;  
The haunting cadence of the litany  
Stole softly out upon the golden calm;  
Kyrie Eleison, Thy mercy Lord  
Christe Eleison, prayer of human need!  
The low sweet voices of the chanting nuns  
Commingling with the organ's tender tones.  
An instant pausing by the open door  
Her heart athrill with Heaven's harmony,  
She passed within, and having then fulfilled  
The ritual of her vow's requirements,  
Resumed her pilgrimage.

Each shrine in turn  
Received the homage of the penitent;  
Who bowed in grief o'er snowy replica  
Of martyred saint all splashed with scarlet stain,  
Dyed deeper by the redly westering sun.  
As kneeling thus, crept through her consciousness  
The knowledge of some passing miracle,  
And looking upward to discern its source  
A soft effulgence as of glory come  
From Heaven was shining all around her.

There  
Above St. Francis' Shrine a vision grew,  
Full in the flame of sunset's crimson glow;

All tender rose and pearl and satin limbed,  
All softly curved and radiant as a star,  
Her draperies floating from her as a veil  
Of parting cloud reveals the planet's light;  
Upon her hair of gold was set a crown  
Wherein unnumbered jewels softly gleamed;  
Within her hand a single lily bloomed  
Upon its slender stem. Around her shone  
Heaven's light resplendent.

The meek nun gazed  
In reverent awe, nor loved the vision less  
That she of face was plain, with figure formed  
Like some young boy that almost reached the gate  
Of sturdy manhood. Yet somewhat redeemed  
The plainness of her features, lustrous eyes  
That lighted up and shone like misty stars  
When she communed with God and He seemed near.  
The vision faded leaving as it passed,  
The exaltation of some lovely dream.  
And bowing low beside the altar place  
The nun sought answer at the Virgin's feet:  
"O holy Mother! Whence this miracle  
Appearing in exquisite comeliness,  
Enhaloed in the glory of the saints,  
And purity upholding in her hand?"

Thus as the gentle suppliant made her plea,  
There wafted down upon the holy calm  
A voice of melting sweetness, like far strains  
Of Heavenly music that one sometimes hears  
When half awakened in the silent night.  
It seemed the blessed Virgin answer gave.  
The heart of her who listened thrilled with awe,  
And scarce could grasp the meaning of the words.

“For that thou hast been faithful God hath sent  
The vision as a mirror to thy faith;  
Thou here hath seen earth’s body cast aside,  
Symbolic of the old life put away,  
And in its place resplendent there has been  
Reflected over sweet St. Francis’ shrine  
As in God’s very mirror face to face  
The glowing image of thy **NEW BORN SOUL!**”







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